

Public Consultation and Communications Plan

Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project

Prepared for:
B.C. Environmental Assessment Office

Prepared by:
VCCEP Ltd.

August 15, 2003

Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	VCCEP Opportunity	1
1.2	Project Overview	2
1.3	Regulatory and Permit Approval Process	2
1.4	Scope of Consultation and Communications Program	2
2.0	GOALS/OBJECTIVES OF CONSULTATION PROGRAM.....	3
2.1	Program Goals	3
2.2	Specific Objectives	3
3.0	INTERESTS IDENTIFICATION	4
3.1	Preliminary Identification of Interests	4
3.2	Database of Interested Parties	5
4.0	CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM	5
4.1	Consultation and Communications Work Plan.....	6
4.1.2	<i>Public Open Houses and Consultation Activities</i>	6
4.1.3	<i>Public Displays</i>	7
4.1.4	<i>Community Advertising</i>	7
4.1.5	<i>Annual Public Meeting</i>	7
4.1.6	<i>Media Relations</i>	7
4.1.7	<i>Contact/Feedback Mechanisms</i>	8
4.1.8	<i>Review of EA Application</i>	8
4.2	Project Phases	8
4.2.1	<i>Consultation Start-up (March 2003)</i>	8
4.2.2	<i>Early Notification Phase (June/July 2003)</i>	9
4.2.3	<i>Pre-Application Phase (August/September 2003)</i>	9
4.2.4	<i>Application Review Phase (October 2003 - March 2004)</i>	10
4.2.5	<i>Post-Approval and Construction Phase (April 2004 – mid 2008)</i>	10
5.0	REFERENCES	11

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the proposed consultation and communications program for the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project, as required for the Environmental Assessment Office's (EAO) public process.

1.1 VCCEP Opportunity

The Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre (VCEC) began its life as the Canadian Pavilion at Expo 86, Vancouver's highly successful world's fair. When Expo 86 wrapped up in October 1986, work began on a major refit that would turn Canada Place and the Canada Pavilion into a modern convention and cruise ship facility.

On July 4, 1987 the VCEC opened its doors for business, and in less than 10 years was operating at capacity, due in large part to its growing international reputation and that of Vancouver. Today, the existing VCEC accommodates 53 major events annually, generating some \$245 million in delegate spending.

While the VCEC has received numerous awards, the most prestigious was received on July 8, 2002 when the Belgium based International Association of Congress Centres (AIPEC) named Vancouver as the "World's Best Convention Centre", beating out 124 of the world's best known meeting places.

The first articulated expansion discussion took place in 1995, following an extensive KPMG report (KPMG 1995), which detailed that expansion was warranted. However, four years later, in October, 1999, the proposed Portside expansion plan on the east side of the convention centre was cancelled when the Province of British Columbia said that it would not consider further expansion unless a more viable alternative was presented.

Over the subsequent years, community, industry and government support for the expansion project increased. The result was the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project Ltd. (VCCEP), the wholly owned company of the Province of British Columbia responsible for the design and construction of the expansion to the convention centre.

Over the first 30 years of the new expansion, the economic benefits will include more than \$1.3 billion in additional tax revenues to the three levels of government (KPMG 2000). In addition, with its proposed opening in 2008, the expansion will account for more than 7,500 new full-time jobs, and the ability to target larger conventions and conferences of up to 10,000 delegates, doubling the existing capacity (KPMG 2000).

With each convention delegate worth some \$1,000 over the course of a three-day visit larger, city-wide meetings represent a major reason for moving forward with expansion plans.

1.2 Project Overview

VCCEP's proposed 491,000 sq. ft. expansion of the VCEC on 4.6 ha (11.3 acres) adjacent to the west side of Canada Place will cost \$495 million. The project is made possible by funding through the federal and provincial governments, as well as a \$90 million commitment from the tourism sector.

The existing convention centre consists of 160,800 sq. ft. of exhibit, meeting, ballroom and pre-function space. On completion, the expanded convention centre will feature more than 651,000 sq. ft. of space, allowing the VCEC to target conventions of up to 10,000 delegates.

1.3 Regulatory and Permit Approval Process

The proposed expansion falls under the new *Environmental Assessment Act*, SBC 2002, c.43, which came into force on December 30, 2002 and is also subject to a review under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. The environmental assessment and review process is managed by the provincial Environmental Assessment Office (EAO), with the participation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), under the terms of the Canada-BC Agreement for Environmental Assessment Co-operation.

Management of the project review has been consigned to the EAO, and VCCEP expects to file its application for an environmental assessment certificate by October 1, 2003.

The EAO, in co-operation with the CEAA, is responsible for determining how the assessment will be conducted, including its scope, procedures and methods, as well as the details of public consultation requirements. A Section 11 Order to this effect was issued by the EAO on May 20, 2003.

The proponent will submit a Preliminary Development Permit (PDP) application to the City of Vancouver. As part of the PDP process, public meetings are required. We will endeavour to integrate these two public review processes.

1.4 Scope of Consultation and Communications Program

The expansion of the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre is one of the city's largest and highest profile public infrastructure projects in 20 years.

As such, the project's public consultation and communications program is designed to build on the already broad public awareness of the existing convention centre and previous expansion proposals, and the importance of the expansion to the community. By any measure, this project has received universal support from across the community.

As a result, the project's consultation and communications program is designed to be as open and interactive as possible, within the timeframes of the overall development process. Interested parties will have ample opportunity to access information, engage in dialogue with project team members and provide input.

The VCCEP Ltd. is also committed to fulfilling its responsibility to consult with First Nations that have an interest in the study area.

2.0 GOALS/OBJECTIVES OF CONSULTATION PROGRAM

2.1 Program Goals

The goals of the consultation and communications program are to ensure that the project:

- meets requirements for consultation and communications set out by the EAO and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency;
- contributes to the achievement of the VCCEP's Strategic Development Plan objectives;
- provides for an open and accountable review process which considers local, regional and provincial interests;
- fosters community support for the overall project planning process; and,
- strengthens on-going relations with local community interests.

2.2 Specific Objectives

The objectives for the program include the following:

- ensure a broad public understanding of the VCCEP, and opportunities for public input;
- meet the consultation and communications requirements of the assessment process conducted by EAO and CEAA;

- raise public awareness about the VCCEP, including its scope, necessity, the benefits it provides to the community and province, and the potential environmental effects caused by the proposed project;
- demonstrate the value of public input and how it contributes to the project's development;
- offer a consultation program which is flexible and responsive to the changing needs of interested parties;
- identify interested parties and their project-related concerns early on in the planning process;
- identify public issues and interests pertaining to potential environmental, economic, social, cultural, heritage and health impacts and/or benefits of the project; and,
- inform interested parties in a timely manner about the results of technical studies, the proposed design for the facilities, and possible mitigation measures for the construction, operation and maintenance of the facilities. This can be best achieved through a joint public review with the City of Vancouver to discuss the proposed design and possible mitigation measures for potential impacts.

3.0 INTERESTS IDENTIFICATION

The VCCEP recognizes that there are a number of specific interested parties who will want to participate in the consultation program. In addition, the VCCEP will provide opportunities for residents in the immediate project area, in particular, and Vancouver, in general, to provide their input throughout the various phases of the planning process.

3.1 Preliminary Identification of Interests

Initially, the following categories of interested parties have been identified for the project:

- federal, provincial and municipal agencies;
- Translink;
- First Nations Bands and Tribal Councils with asserted interests in the project;
- nearby neighborhood groups and ratepayer associations (e.g. Coal Harbour, Gastown);
- Port of Vancouver and Canada Place;
- Vancouver business organizations (Vancouver Board of Trade, Gastown Business Improvement Society, Downtown Vancouver Association, Taxi Association)
- Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee
- Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (BIA)
- tourism and convention industry organizations (Tourism Vancouver, Tourism BC, Vancouver Hotel Association, Meeting Planners International, Tour Operators)

- float plane and marina operators and businesses;
- environmental/naturalist/recreation organizations in Vancouver and province-wide;
- other interested individuals in Greater Vancouver;
- City of Vancouver residents; and,
- media.

3.2 Database of Interested Parties

A database will be developed by the VCCEP to assist with distribution of project information. It will include the names and addresses of the individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in the project. This database will allow VCCEP to tailor on-going project updates and newsletters. It will be maintained by the VCCEP and continually updated.

As part of the database program, the project will work with organizations to enlist their support in disseminating information. For instance, the Vancouver Board of Trade can be counted onto distribute updates via its "Fax Blast" system to some 4,000-plus members.

4.0 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

The VCCEP is committed to involving the local community and other stakeholders through an open and interactive public consultation process that is fully integrated with the project review. Public reviews will be in cooperation with the City of Vancouver to ensure best coverage of issues and mitigative measures for the proposed project.

There are five components proposed for the consultation and communications program:

- Project Start-up (March 2003)
- Phase I Early Notification (June/July 2003)
- Phase II Pre-Application (August/September 2003)
- Phase III Application Review (October 2003 – March 2004)
- Phase IV Post-Approval and Construction (April 2004 – mid 2008)

The timeframes associated with each phase of activity are approximate and may be adjusted as the project progresses.

The type and extent of the program may change during the various phases of the project depending on such factors as:

- intensity and commitment of the public interest, with an understanding that this commitment may change throughout the various phases of the project;

- introduction of new project information; or,
- other public issues that may emerge or subside during the course of the consultation program.

4.1 Consultation and Communications Work Plan

Throughout Phases I-IV, opportunities for public input will be provided. Proven consultation and communications approaches and mechanisms will be used that satisfy VCCEP guidelines and regulatory requirements and that respond to the needs of interested parties, including:

4.1.1 VCCEP Web-site

Designed as a central source of public information, the project web-site will provide background information, project details, regular updates, and links to related sites (e.g. EAO, CEAA, VCEC, Tourism Vancouver).

The web-site will be online by end of August, 2003 and will be updated on an ongoing basis as the project proceeds.

The web-site will also allow interested parties to send comments, questions and recommendations to the project via email.

4.1.2 Public Open Houses and Consultation Activities

A series of public open houses detailing the project will be scheduled in co-ordination with the EAO and City of Vancouver, beginning in September at the VCEC. The City of Vancouver's involvement with public open houses is due to VCCEP's obligations under the Preliminary Development Permit, not as part of the Environmental Assessment process.

Open houses will be advertised and promoted. In addition, they will be the subject of both a public service announcement from the project, and a media advisory, all of which will be distributed at least one week prior to the open house.

In addition to the open houses, other consultation activities will include:

- by-invitation presentations;
- site tours; and,
- technical workshops.

4.1.3 Public Displays

An exhibit display detailing the project and its elements will be part of the VCCEP offices at 999 West Hastings. In addition, the display will include comment and feedback cards, which can be returned to VCCEP.

An additional information display will be located in a public location at the VCEC, and will include project details and a comment and feedback card, as well as project contact information (telephone/email/web).

4.1.4 Community Advertising

The project will use The Vancouver Sun, The Province, the city-wide edition of The Vancouver Courier, and WestEnder community newspaper to advertise public meetings.

The first advertisement will run one week prior to the first open house. Additional open houses will be similarly advertised and promoted.

4.1.5 Annual Public Meeting

Recognizing that there is on-going public interest in the expansion project, VCCEP will, in co-operation with the Vancouver Board of Trade and Tourism Vancouver, co-ordinate an annual public meeting about the project.

The timing of the first meeting is still to be determined.

The meeting will provide interested individuals with a project update, as well as an accountability session where VCCEP representatives and others will provide additional details and take questions. The meeting will be held under the auspices of the Board of Trade's "Spirit of Vancouver" campaign and be held at the VCEC.

4.1.6 Media Relations

The project will build a comprehensive media database and ensure all interested media, including city desks, assignment desks and specific reporters assigned to the business, tourism and civic beats are included.

In addition, VCCEP will carry out a comprehensive media relations campaign as part of its public information commitment, and will supply media with comprehensive project information kits.

4.1.7 Contact/Feedback Mechanisms

- project information line (switchboard): 604.484.5200
- e-mail address for VCCEP: info@vccep.bc.ca
- mailing address: VCCEP Ltd., 19th Floor-999 West Hastings St., Vancouver, BC V6C 2W2
- facsimile: 604.484.5201
- web-site: <http://www.vccep.com>

4.18 Review of EA Application

The application for an environmental assessment certificate, to be submitted by VCCEP Ltd. to the EAO, will be available for public comments, complying with a process set out in Section 19.2 of EAO's Section 11 Order. This process will assure another consultation opportunity on the project.

4.2 Project Phases

The following project phases are milestones used to achieve the overall objectives for the VCCEP public consultation and communication plan as outlined in Section 2.0.

4.2.1 Consultation Start-up (March 2003)

The main objectives of project start-up include:

- preparing the consultation and communications plan for implementation;
- identifying initial public interests and issues associated with the project; and,
- preparing for the early notification phase of the consultation process.

The key actions and/or deliverables include:

- information and communications systems set-up:
 - establishing a project information line (would be monitored throughout all phases)
 - developing stakeholder mailing lists/databases (would be maintained throughout all phases)
- developing consultation and communications materials in preparation for subsequent phases:
 - project introduction newsletter (regular project updates will be issued)
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - project information advertisement

- media kits
- fact sheets
- developing a project web-site (would be maintained throughout all phases)
- content for project web site

4.2.2 *Early Notification Phase (June/July 2003)*

The main objective proposed for this phase is:

- early notification of the upcoming consultation process

The key actions and/or deliverables for this phase include:

- holding one-on-one initial meetings with government agencies and elected officials
- placing an information advertisement in community newspapers
- web-site development continuing

4.2.3 *Pre-Application Phase (August/September 2003)*

The main objectives proposed for this phase include:

- presenting preliminary project information to interested parties and soliciting input on potential project issues and concerns through various mechanisms
- presenting more detailed technical information (as it becomes available) to interested parties and soliciting input on it through various mechanisms
- distributing a project introductory newsletter
 - mail to all businesses, organizations and individuals on project mailing list
 - mail-drop to all residents and businesses in Vancouver
- providing regular project updates to interested parties, including Vancouver residents
- responding to inquiries regarding the project
- continuing to identify concerns, interests and support
- continuing to document and summarize input received

The key actions and/or deliverables proposed for this phase include:

- holding public events in Vancouver (e.g. public open houses)
 - including presentation of informational storyboards, site maps and fact sheets on specific project aspects
- holding stakeholder workshops on key marine, terrestrial and traffic aspects of the project

- holding meetings with federal, provincial, regional and municipal governments to present project information and gather input
- holding meetings with First Nations and Tribal Councils with interests in the project area to present project information and gather input
- holding one-on-one meetings/providing presentations to interested parties to provide project information and gather input
- providing regular project updates, including a work plan for environmental, social and economic studies and the results of studies, through mail-out, mail-drop and posting on web-site
- ongoing media relations
- preparing a comprehensive public consultation report for the VCCEP, which would form a component of the project application to the EAO - this report would provide information on project issues and project support.

4.2.4 Application Review Phase (October 2003 - March 2004)

The main objectives proposed for this phase include:

- continuing to conduct discussions with interested parties regarding issues and opportunities to avoid or minimize adverse effects
- continuing to document and summarize input

Following the direction of the EAO during their review of the VCCEP's application for an environmental assessment certificate, the VCCEP will continue with communications and consultation activities.

The key actions and/or deliverables proposed for this phase could include:

- ongoing meetings with federal, provincial, regional, and municipal governments and First Nations, as required
- ongoing meetings with additional interested parties, as required
- responding to inquiries regarding the project
- ongoing project updates through mail-out, mail-drop and postings on web-site
- continuing to document and summarize input
- ongoing media relations

4.2.5 Post-Approval and Construction Phase (April 2004 – mid 2008)

The main objectives proposed for this phase are to:

- communicate the results of the review process to interested parties and the public
- provide ongoing communications through construction and into operations

The key actions and/or deliverables of this phase include:

- ongoing project updates through mail-outs, mail-drops and postings on web-site
- ongoing meetings with interested parties, as required
- ongoing media relations

Ongoing monitoring of the program will help the VCCEP to develop an effective consultation and communications plan for the construction and operation phases of the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project.

5.0 REFERENCES

KPMG. 1995. *Assessment of Market Potential for Expanded Convention Facilities*. April 25, 1995.

KPMG. 2000. *Expanding the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Center: Market Justification and Economic Benefits*. Prepared for: Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Task Force. February 2000.

